

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.303
8 June 1967
ENGLISH

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND THIRD MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 June 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. A. A. ROSHCHIN

(Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics)

GE.67-10351

67-16660

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A.F. AZEREDO da SILVEIRA

Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA

Mr. S. de QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV

Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV

Mr. T. DAMIANOV

Mr. G. GAVRILOV

Burma:

U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS

Mr. S.F. RAE

Mr. C.J. MARSHALL

Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. WINKLER

Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI

Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI

Mr. E. FRANCO

Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. J. CASTANEDA

Miss E. AGUIRRE

Mr. F. CORREA

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO
Mr. B.O. TUNWE

Poland:

Mr. M. BLUSZTAJN
Mr. J. GOLDBLAT
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO
Mr. O. IONESCO
Mr. C. UNGUREANU

Sweden:

Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. R. BOMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. V.P. SUSLOV
Mr. R.M. TIMERBAIEV
Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN

United Arab Republic:

Mr. A. OSMAN
Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. M. SHAKER

United Kingdom:

Sir Harold BEELEY
Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. G. BUNN
Mr. C.G. BREAN
Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN: (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translation from Russian): I declare open the three hundred and third plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.
2. Mr. FOSTER (United States of America): Today I wish to speak about a problem which must be resolved if a non-proliferation treaty is to be effective as a genuine instrument of non-proliferation. The problem referred to concerns the use of nuclear explosive devices for peaceful projects.
3. In view of the statements which have been made in our Committee, it did not seem possible for us to remain silent on this issue any longer. We refer specifically to the statement of Ambassador da Costa, the representative of Brazil, at our meeting of 18 May (ENDC/PV.297) and the statement of Ambassador Trivedi, the representative of India, at our meeting of 23 May (ENDC/PV.298). Those statements contain some sentiments with which my Government is in complete sympathy. They also contain many ideas which we are convinced are unrealistic.
4. Unfortunately, we have not yet had time to analyse fully the important statement of Mrs. Myrdal at our meeting of 6 June (ENDC/PV.302). Clearly, it was a statement warranting careful study by all of us because of its wealth of important suggestions aimed at constructive solution to our problems. I will therefore wish to return to it at a later meeting. In the meantime, I should like to express as an initial comment our agreement with two basic elements of Mrs. Myrdal's presentation. First, we were reassured to hear explicit recognition of the "indisputable fact that any nuclear explosive device might be used as a nuclear weapon," (ENDC/PV.302, para.3) and the resulting necessity of prohibiting manufacture of such devices in a non-proliferation treaty. Second, we share completely the Swedish delegation's desire to concentrate on the positive and creative aspects of the problem: the challenge of creating international procedures so that -- and here I use Mrs. Myrdal's words -- "the equitable access to the 'use' of nuclear explosive devices for peaceful purposes may be assured to the whole international community." (ibid., para. 9). The statement of our colleague from Sweden represents for us a significant contribution to our work in meeting this challenge and we will therefore study it, and return to it, with this objective in mind.

(Mr. Foster, United States)

5. The position of the United States in regard to nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes is dictated -- let me repeat, dictated -- by what Mrs. Myrdal referred to as "an indisputable fact." This is that a nuclear explosive device capable of moving vast quantities of earth in an uninhabited area is also a nuclear explosive capable of destroying a city and its inhabitants. No amount of argumentation can obscure this fact or its implications.

6. In his statement at our meeting of 23 May Mr. Trivedi said:

"The Indian delegation does not deny that the technology involved in the production of a nuclear weapon is the same as the technology which produces a peaceful explosive device, although a weapon has many characteristics which are not present in a peaceful device." (ENDC/PV.298, para.23).

7. We welcome the recognition that the technology involved in the production of a nuclear weapon is the same as the technology which produces a peaceful device. However, we believe it misleading to assert that a weapon has many characteristics which are not present in a peaceful device. The relevant question is not whether a peaceful nuclear explosive device has a set of characteristics completely identical with those of a nuclear weapon. Obviously, every single characteristic of a peaceful nuclear device may not be the same as every one of a weapon. For one thing, as we have stated earlier, a nuclear explosive device for peaceful purposes may be a more sophisticated device than many nuclear weapons, because in order to be practical for some applications it must be relatively free of radioactive debris. This means that a nation producing nuclear explosives suitable for civil engineering projects will have to acquire technology even more sophisticated than that required to produce usable nuclear weapons. The implications of this should be clear to all who are anxious to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

8. But all nuclear weapons have one characteristic in common. This is the characteristic that upon activation of a prearranged trigger mechanism they can release large quantities of energy in a very short period of time from sources of relatively small volume and light weight. They are enormously concentrated sources of explosive energy. This is precisely the relevant characteristic of a nuclear explosive device for peaceful purposes, and it is this characteristic which makes peaceful nuclear explosive devices readily adaptable for use as weapons. Appropriately packaged and fused, they could be employed as weapons in a large variety of modes. For example, a nuclear explosive device for peaceful purposes

(Mr. Foster, United States)

could be dropped by many types of military and commercial aircraft, and fused in a manner so as to explode on or above a target. In addition, any nuclear explosive useful for peaceful application could be transported by other means to a target area and used as a military demolition munition.

9. So we must return to that one indisputable fact. A nuclear explosive device for peaceful purposes could be used as a nuclear weapon. Both have one significant, relevant characteristic so far as a non-proliferation treaty is concerned. Both can be used to threaten, to attack, to destroy.

10. I wish to refer again to Mr. Trivedi's speech. He stated that aeronautics, electronics, even steel fabrication are technologies which can be used for weapons as well as economic development. He then concluded, "That does not mean, therefore, that only the poor and developing nations should be denied all technology for fear they may use it for military purposes." (ENDC/PV/298, para. 23). No one is proposing that the developing nations should be denied all technologies. No one is proposing that the developing nations should be denied even some technologies. We are proposing that the non-nuclear-weapon nations deny themselves one technology, without denying themselves the benefits of that technology. That one technology is the manufacture of nuclear explosive devices -- which, whatever their original purpose, can be used for war. Certainly, no one here really believes that this technology of nuclear explosives is to be equated with that of aeronautics, electronics, and steel fabrication.

11. The United States has made a proposal, supported by many countries at this Conference, for dealing with nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes in a manner designed to achieve an effective non-proliferation treaty. We have joined to that proposal suggestions for ensuring that when there are benefits from peaceful nuclear explosions they can be shared on a non-discriminatory basis by all (ENDC/PV.295 paras. 73 et seq.). These, surely, are not proposals which raise the spectre of denying the developing countries all technology for fear they may use it for military purposes.

12. If I may speak for a moment on a personal basis, I should like to express to the Committee my own dislike of the inference that we seek to exploit a non-proliferation treaty to restrict the flow of peaceful technology. Having been a representative of the United States involved in the administration of international economic co-operation, I have spent many years working on projects in which the United States has contributed,

(Mr. Foster, United States)

in every possible way, financial or other resources which other countries in less favourable circumstances have needed for mutual assistance. As early as 1954, several of us through a private foundation and with the full co-operation of the United States Atomic Energy Commission initiated the dissemination to many countries of a substantial amount of information on nuclear physics with particular reference to research reactors and isotopes for medical purposes.

13. The record of the United States with regard to international nuclear co-operation is, I believe, unparalleled in international relations. Need I remind anyone that through the Atoms for Peace Programme the United States Government has made available to all nations vast quantities of valuable and vital technological information. For example, the United States, as well as some other advanced civil nuclear Powers, have made available materials and technology for the building of nuclear reactors. The fact that these reactors produce plutonium that can be used in weapons has not prevented us from supplying these materials and technology under adequate safeguards. Nuclear reactor technology has been encouraged among all States, and not denied to any that are willing to accept adequate safeguards. Thus, the benefits of this new and vital technology can be realized by those States through their own efforts as well as through assistance from those countries with longer experience in nuclear affairs.

14. The non-proliferation treaty will not impede peaceful uses of atomic energy by the developing countries. In fact it should further stimulate the full development of the peaceful uses of the atom. That point was fully explained by you, Mr. Chairman, at our meeting on 18 May, and I should therefore like to quote from your statement:

"Our point of view in that regard is that the solution of the non-proliferation problem is one of the most important conditions that would ensure for the non-nuclear countries the most rapid and successful development of their peaceful atomic industry.

"Renunciation by the non-nuclear countries of military ways of using atomic energy would enable them to concentrate all their scientific, technical and material resources on the peaceful utilization of the achievements of nuclear physics, which would undoubtedly widen their potentialities in that field. Indeed, it is well known what huge efforts and material resources are required for the development of nuclear weapons. The great material expenditure and the diversion of the efforts and energy of scientists from peaceful to military problems would all hinder the peaceful development of atomic energy." (ENDC/PV.297, paras. 15,16)
The United States is in full agreement with that statement.

(Mr. Foster, United States)

15. At the outset of my remarks I said that there was much with which my Government could sympathize in the speeches of Mr. da Costa and Mr. Trivedi. What we sympathize with is the desire, not only expressed in those two statements but shared by many other countries around the world, to utilize the most modern technology for the benefit of their peoples. Because of our full sympathy with such aspirations the position of the United States has been that when benefits from peaceful nuclear explosive devices can be realized then they should be shared on a non-discriminatory basis. In order to move forward with the consideration of how non-nuclear countries can be assured of receiving benefits without fear of their being granted or withheld for extraneous reasons, I elaborated at our meeting of 21 March the thinking of the United States on five principles to guide our work (ENDC/PV.295, paras. 73-78). I should like at this time to stress that the procedures for international co-operation in accomplishing peaceful nuclear explosive projects should be developed in full consultation with the non-nuclear-weapon States. We have not had to be prodded in order to initiate discussion of these procedures. For our part, we welcome exploration and comment by others. Finally, we would envisage, as suggested by Mr. Roshchin at our meeting of 18 May, that the conditions for carrying out nuclear explosions could be resolved through separate international agreement (ENDC/PV.297, para. 21).

16. The type of international procedures we have in mind would permit countries to perform their own engineering work, utilizing nuclear explosives detonated under the control of a nuclear-weapon State. We were disappointed therefore to hear Mr. da Costa state, also on 18 May, that Brazil will not waive the right to conduct research without limitation and eventually to manufacture or receive nuclear explosives that will enable Brazil to perform great engineering works (*ibid.*, para. 48). Under the international procedures which the United States is committed to seek, Brazil would not find it necessary to manufacture or receive -- that is, to possess -- nuclear explosives to be able to perform great engineering works.

17. Since this is a most important point, I should like to elaborate further on it. There has been some concern that the prohibition of the acquisition of peaceful nuclear explosives would render the non-nuclear-weapon States dependent upon a monopoly exercised by the nuclear-weapon States in carrying out nuclear explosive projects. Such concern is without foundation. Under the provisions which the United States contemplates, nuclear-weapon States would merely provide nuclear

(Mr. Foster, United States)

explosive services, and the country in which the project was conducted would be responsible for the remainder of the project, if that was its choice. In essence, this would not be different from a situation in which conventional explosives or other equipment are purchased abroad. The main difference is that the Government, not a commercial concern, would be supplying the nuclear explosive and would maintain custody and control of the explosive until detonation.

18. Information on the technology of applying peaceful nuclear explosives is unclassified. Such information is readily available to any nation. Accordingly, there is nothing to prevent governments of non-nuclear-weapon countries, or companies in those countries, from developing the same engineering capabilities which will be available to the United States or to United States companies. Permit me to stress this point: a non-proliferation treaty which prohibits the manufacture or acquisition of nuclear explosives would not restrict the dissemination of application technology in any fashion. Accordingly, we must vigorously reject the implication suggested in this Committee that somehow what we have in mind might be the establishment of "an atomic super-commercial monopoly."

19. What is important is that all may be assured of having full and equal availability of peaceful nuclear explosive services when they are needed for peaceful projects. It is not beyond our ingenuity and our good will to design and bring into force international procedures in which all may have confidence and which will ensure the complete and fair sharing of those services. It is not necessary, desirable or economical for all nations to be self-sufficient in the development and ownership of nuclear explosives as long as the services are readily available for application by all countries.

20. I should like next to dwell for a moment on a phrase which has often been used in our statements about the provision of peaceful nuclear explosive services. We have often said that these will be available "if and when" projects become technologically feasible. It is possible that peaceful nuclear explosives will, some time, some day, contribute greatly to man's welfare. But we cannot be certain of that now. In fact, the United States programme is still in an "if and when" status, as we stated in this Committee on 9 August 1966 (ENDC/PV.280, p. 15) and 21 March 1967. It is a fact that the United States has not yet demonstrated that the technology for any -- I repeat, any -- specific peaceful application of nuclear explosions is technically and economically feasible. Some private companies in the United States

(Mr. Foster, United States)

and elsewhere and some foreign governments have evaluated certain applications of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and have made assessments that the technology, if successfully developed, would have economic potential in certain applications. Whether those evaluations will be confirmed requires further development, such as additional experiments with nuclear explosives.

21. Like all great projects, our work for the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty must involve choices. Initially, the States here involved in these negotiations will have to choose whether they wish to formulate and support a non-proliferation treaty which will be an effective treaty to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons.

22. There can be many factors which validly enter into this choice. Each State making its decision will have to decide for itself whether its security interests are better served by choosing to support such a treaty or by not accepting it. No State can possibly make such a choice for any other State. We recognize this. But every State can rest assured that its choice will be viewed by other States as one which has been made with ample opportunity to become cognizant of the realities of what constitutes the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The proliferation of nuclear weapons includes the proliferation of nuclear explosive devices. From the point of view of the United States, should a State decide that it does not wish to accept a treaty which prohibits the spread of nuclear explosive devices we will have to conclude that it does not wish to accept a treaty which prevents the spread of nuclear weapons.

23. As I said earlier, facts can have inevitable and unalterable consequences; and that is also true of choices. For those States which determine that they want to support a non-proliferation treaty which prevents proliferation, a choice will have been made not only to stop nuclear proliferation but to participate in the expanding international co-operation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities. Those activities will be facilitated, not impeded, by the conclusion of the non-proliferation treaty.

24. Participating States will have made the choice of accepting the offer to share in the potential benefits of nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes. They will be sharing, at minimal cost to them, in the progress which has been feasible because

(Mr. Foster, United States)

of the investment of billions of dollars expended on nuclear weapons development over a twenty-year period. Participating States will be choosing to make possible for their peoples the potential economic gains which they could not realistically have hoped to achieve on their own, unless they had invested the immense human and financial resources to develop and manufacture advanced thermonuclear weapons.

25. There can thus be no economic justification for the independent development of nuclear explosive devices by non-nuclear weapon countries for their potential domestic applications. The cost at which the United States will be able to provide nuclear explosive services will be much lower for the non-nuclear-weapon States than the cost if those countries were to develop their own nuclear devices solely for peaceful purposes. Specifically, as I made clear at our meeting of 21 March, costs would be kept as low as possible and they would not, for example, include the cost expended over the years for research and development (ENDC/PV.295, para. 76).

26. We do not need to negotiate and formulate a treaty which prevents proliferation. We also need to explore further the means of assuring to all that peaceful nuclear explosives will be available on a non-discriminatory basis, and at as low a cost as possible, when those devices can be used for practical projects. I feel confident, on the basis of Mr. Roshchin's statement at our 297th meeting, that the Government of the Soviet Union shares these views.

27. We cannot close our eyes and pretend that facts which exist do not exist. The United States cannot accept argumentation that flies in the face of fact. But despite everything that has been said, I cannot help but hope that facts will be recognized. I cannot help but hope that all will finally agree that the proposals which we have suggested for sharing the benefits from peaceful nuclear explosives can and will redound to the advantage of all participating States.

28. Mr. TRIVEDI (India): We are indeed gratified at the very weighty and well-considered statement made this morning by the representative of the United States, Mr. Foster. As he so rightly pointed out, we must all recognize facts. I should have thought, most humbly, that when the Secretary-General of the Brazilian Foreign Office and I spoke here in the Committee we mentioned facts. What we do not like is wrong conclusions drawn from facts, the fallacious reasoning arising from facts.

(Mr. Trivedi, India)

29. The Indian delegation is in complete agreement with what Mr. Foster said towards the end of his statement -- which we shall study with great care and to which we will revert, if necessary, at a later stage. I refer to his remarks regarding the urgent necessity for a treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. There is no doubt on that score in the mind of anybody, at least around this table. That is what we were saying long before many of the recent converts to non-proliferation began shouting about it. All that we have said is that the treaty should be a real one, a treaty which solves the problem of proliferation of nuclear weapons.

30. The Indian delegation agrees with Mr. Foster also that what we should avoid is proliferation of nuclear weapon devices. I shall develop that point a little later, but we agree entirely with that. As I have just said, we have not Mr. Foster's statement before us at the moment, and we shall deal with it later if necessary, but I thought I would make one or two comments on some of the points he made.

31. I think it is wrong to say that no nation can develop peaceful nuclear explosive devices unless it develops very sophisticated technology for thermonuclear devices.

As I have said, there are many uses of peaceful explosions. There are uses of peaceful explosives underground for extracting oil from deep deposits, for which purpose certainly conventional methods are not at present available. These technologies will, we hope, soon be feasible through nuclear energy. We do not say, for example, that a developing nation should not develop steel technology unless it has the full sophistication, the entire gamut of steel technology. We in India started our own steel industry somewhere about 1914. We still have not some of the sophisticated technology for steel. That does not mean that we should not have developed our steel technology in 1914 or that we should not develop it today. And fission devices are important. In fact, underground fission devices today are to some extent, particularly for many countries, better because they avoid many problems of radioactivity.

32. Mr. Foster said, I was very happy to note, that in the proposition that is being put forward it is not the intention to deny to the developing and poor nations all technology for fear they may use it for military purposes. He added that all that the nuclear-weapon Powers want to do is to deny them technology for manufacturing nuclear devices for fear they may use them for military purposes. We all hope that we shall soon have an adequate and equitable treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. After that, we shall no doubt discuss the question of conventional arms,

(Mr. Privadi, India)

and I presume the super-Powers will say that the developing nations should be denied the technology of steel for conventional weapons. Of course they can proliferate them. Just as they want to proliferate nuclear weapons, they can by analogy proliferate conventional weapons as well.

33. It is a question of what a country would like to do in its economic interests. In this country, Switzerland, for example, which is a very developed country, they do not manufacture motor-cars. It is their sovereign decision. They do not think it is desirable to manufacture motor-cars; they would much rather import them. That does not mean that Switzerland would like to sign away the right to manufacture motor-cars if it is considered economically desirable for Switzerland. Well, we would much rather import peaceful nuclear devices. But that would be our own decision and not because of any prohibition.

34. As I said earlier, we agree entirely that we should avoid proliferation of nuclear weapons, both vertical and horizontal. We should avoid the possible, problematic proliferation to new countries, and the existing, the real proliferation among the nuclear-weapon Powers. We should avoid both. And, as I have said, we also agree that we should avoid proliferation of nuclear-weapon devices. We have never maintained -- I cannot speak for others, although I know that Brazil does not maintain -- that there should be proliferation of nuclear weapon devices. We, in fact, have suggested complete regulation, complete control over the process, which is not at the moment something which the nuclear-weapon Powers want for their own nuclear weapons. We do not want any proliferation. We want to regulate. We do not want a stockpiling of nuclear devices. We want peaceful nuclear devices controlled, regulated -- before manufacture, during manufacture and after manufacture. Their use should be controlled and a proper system should be devised which would ensure that a particular peaceful nuclear explosive device is used for peaceful explosive purposes.

35. That is where the difference lies. I am reminded of an apocryphal story. During the last war, when the United States was launching one ship a day, the launching was costing a lot of bottles of champagne -- one bottle of champagne for each launching. Of course when we launch our ships we do it with coconuts. That proves the point.

(Mr. Trivedi, India)

We have for many years had the technology not only for nuclear explosive devices but for nuclear weapons, but we have not used it for weapons. Anyway, to continue the story, this particular practice was not liked by the Women's Temperance League in the United States. They thought it immoral that so much champagne, alcohol, should be used in that way, and so they went in a deputation to President Roosevelt and said, "Mr. President, you are very sinful; all this champagne, all this alcohol, is very sinful." The President, with a twinkle in his eye, said, "Madam, you are mistaken. Do you know that when we launch a ship with a bottle of champagne that ship takes to water for the rest of her life?" That is exactly what we are saying about nuclear explosive devices. They are manufactured only for destruction and not for stockpiling.

36. We also want the weapons to be destroyed -- something we have not yet been able to achieve as far as the nuclear-weapon Powers are concerned. We are not prodding anyone else; we want this to happen. When we talk about nuclear explosive devices, we want them for peaceful purposes, we want them fully regulated before, during and after manufacture. All that we say is, let them be regulated, let them be internationally controlled, let it be seen that all countries accept this regulation and this control. This is not a new argument; it has been going on since 1946. "Super commercial atomic monopoly" was not my expression; it was used in 1946. At any rate, I do not want to develop that point further.

37. As I said, I just wanted to make a few comments, and if necessary I shall revert to the matter later.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 303rd plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador A.A. Roshchin, representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

"Statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America and India.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 13 June 1967, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.303/Corr.1
14 July 1967
ENGLISH ONLY

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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Corrigendum

Page 11, paragraph 26, line 1 "We do not need" should read "We do need";

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